

The Maine Farmer.

B. L. BOARDMAN, Editor.

Our Home, Our Country, and Our Brother Man.

Hoing.

The work of hoing follows close upon that of planting, and keeping a little in advance of the different leading operations upon the farm, we next take up the hoe and "hoe out our row."

Formerly hoing was almost always performed by hand, but in recent years the improvements in agricultural implements have been such that horse-hoes of different patterns have been constructed which are intended to do away with the use of the hand-hoe to a great extent, not only in planting but in hoing. We have seen none, however, which performs the latter operation to our complete satisfaction, unless in the single instance of hoing potatoes. If the earth is pulled up about potatoes, at hoing time, and even over them, it is not an injury but often a benefit to the crop. Corn, however, does not like such treatment. The ground in a corn field should be kept as nearly level as possible, and the crop is particularly averse to being bent down or choked up by earth. If at hoing from earth is put up about the plants, the old earth to the same depth should be taken away. We have never seen a horse-hoe work so completely in a corn field, that it was not necessary to go over it afterwards with the hand-hoe; and such being the case we had rather have a good cultivator run between the rows both ways, to loosen the ground, than to have a horse-hoe go through which made any progress. Still, it seems desirable if possible, to accomplish this part of farm work with a horse. The hand-hoe of several sorts of corn and potatoes is a considerable tax upon a man who farms it, "short handed," as many are compelled to. It is claimed for a new implement, known as Thomas' Broadsword-Weeder—which we made mention a few weeks since—that by going over a corn field with it, the first two hoeings of corn are completely done away with. This weeder has teeth which slant backward, and it may be that by a proper adjustment of the sides or angles of the hoe, (where care has been given to the slanting of the crop) it can be worked to advantage in loosening or harrowing the corn—improvement as it seems to talk about harrowing corn. Of one thing, however, we are certain, the more attention given to planting corn—to have the rows and hills at equal distances apart—the better it can be cultivated and taken care of when it is done wholly or in part by the aid of horse implements. For our own part we can hardly be made to believe that the hand-hoe is to be entirely superseded, even in the field. For garden use it must always hold its place—and a most important one—against all else. Woods will grow, and any good crop raised in field or garden, is done at a sacrifice of much hard work. And for a considerable portion of the work of hoing nothing seems to take the place of the hand implement. The nice weeding about corn and garden crops cannot well be done by larger tools. The scuffle hoe for garden use is an excellent implement, as in using it the person can stand nearly upright, thereby being relieved of the back-aching work consequent upon using the ordinary short handled hoe. We think but little of adjustable hoes. The several crops do not require different angles to the blade, and the same must be liable to work loose or become useless from constant changing before the hoe is nearly worn out. A common hoe for field work, and a light garden scuffle or surface hoe are much better. We believe the two can hardly be combined in one implement to advantage. A word upon another point. Frequent hoeings, even during the driest seasons contribute to the benefit of the crop. By the loosening of the soil, the air, and especially night air, charged with moisture even in times of severe drought, obtains ready access to the roots of plants, and becomes condensed in the soil. Very often during a hard summer drought we have seen corn leaves and other vegetation roll up during the day time, but come out again at night in consequence of the falling of the dew, or the prevalence of moist air. Where the ground is not stirred it becomes crusted over or "baked," as it is called, and hence the moisture from below does not find its way up through to meet the condensed moisture air of night. But where ground is frequently hoed the reverse is the case, hence the benefit of repeated hoeings during the summer months. Upon this point one of our late English journals mentioned the fact that during the extremely dry season of 1826, a gentleman was in the habit of hoing, with his own hand, three drills of turneps, daily. The result was that the three drills thus hoed were a good crop, while the yield upon the remainder of the field, hoed less frequently, came almost to nothing.

Good Workmanship in Implements.

The number and variety of improved agricultural implements of the day, witness to the activity of the inventive genius of our people in a direction, which a few years since received no thought or attention whatever. But their construction also calls for praise in another line. Most of our labor-saving implements and machines are in all their details made of good material, and show as high a degree of workmanship as to demand the commendation of all farmers and those who are supposed to be better judges of the way wood and iron should be put together. The casting of the iron parts and their finish, the shaping of the wood portion and its connection with the iron parts, the nice work exhibited even upon portions of our farm implements when for mere use it would not be expected, the painting and ornamentation of the whole machine, when completed, all display a degree of perfection in their several parts which the makers or purchasers of farm implements would have been surprised at a dozen years ago. Our mowers, rakes, tedders, plows, and the host of smaller implements—down to the smallest tools of the farm and garden—are all specimens of art, as well as through workmanship. We do not now speak of "show machines," by any means, but of such every implement put into the market for a purchaser. We are not prepared to say that these machines are any better for the extra work they put into them, but we believe farmers would be slow to purchase any tool or implement not well finished. Indeed, we have known the very quality of finish to decide the point, with some farmers as to the particular mower purchased. And the judgment of farmers has become so educated, that manufacturers have been compelled to make not only good, but good looking and well finished tools. Where, as years ago, farmers were contented with hand-made implements, and with those roughly hammered out by the village blacksmith, they now demand light, smooth, and well finished tools, and the makers of agricultural implements at the present day, could not afford to neglect the quality of their goods, if it is to be a market for them, and they are not nearly wrought and attracted.

Something about Muck.

Several correspondents having lately revived, through our columns, the by no means new question as to the value of muck, we present for their consideration a word or two upon the same subject.

Experiments in the analysis and practical use of muck are of such number and the results have been so such as to prove that it should never be used in the crude state, or on being immediately thrown up from its bed. The time it should be allowed to decompose depends to a considerable extent upon the character of the deposit. If it has been lying in stagnant water, or if water has been soaking through it—in which latter case it will be found of but little value for fertilizing purposes—it should remain exposed to the action of air, rain and frost for at least a twelvemonth. If, on the other hand, it comes from a dry situation it may be used as an absorbent after being crushed and exposed for but three or four months.

It is an absorbent that we place the greatest value upon muck. When thoroughly dried it is not only a complete absorbent, but it is also a most perfect deodorizing agent; so that by its use in the cow stable the most valuable part of the voidings of a stock of cattle, and that usually suffered to go to waste, the liquid portion, is not only saved, but absolute cleanliness, and therefore healthfulness, is secured. When saturated, the muck should not be left where it will wash, as in a short time it would become almost valueless, by the loss of that which it contained through absorption. It must remain in some covered situation until hauled upon the land.

Again, muck forms a most useful ingredient in the compost heap. Used for this purpose, in connection with stable manure, lime, ashes, salt, &c.—it becomes a valuable dressing, added from greatly augmenting the quantity of the farm fertilizers. For many uses, especially for corn, garden crops, and for dressing for grass lands, it is regarded by all who have ever used it as better than pure dung; especially if applied on light open soil, liable to suffer from drought.

The question is often asked by farmers if muck should be used alone or in connection with other manures. This question can be quite accurately answered by saying that generally it is not. Its value in this respect results from its mechanical action. On sandy, porous soils, such as are liable to leach, and to readily feel the effect of drought, an application of muck would give—in consequence of its quality of attracting and retaining moisture—greater consistency to the soil; and upon clayey soils it would also serve to render them less stiff and rigid, and more susceptible of cultivation.

In some of his forcible and conclusive sentences, Liebig has shown how poor muck, consisting for the most part of inert vegetable matter, and which has ceased to undergo further voluntary decomposition, often contains substances highly injurious to vegetation, such as sulphate of iron, free phosphoric acid and sulphuric acid; but that these are capable of being neutralized and turned to plant food by the action of lime. This should direct all farmers in the use they make of muck as a fertilizer.

Fish Culture in America.

THEO. CULBERT. By Seth Green. Published by Seth Green and A. S. Collins, Caledonia, N. Y. 1870. Pamphlet, pp. 52.

As breeding in our country is gradually approaching a science, and as a practical literature is also being written, the obstacles that have from the first worked against its complete success. The literature of the subject is also becoming quite voluminous, and has much of genuine nationality to it. The appearance of the above little treatise—from one of the pioneers of fish breeding in America, affords an opportunity to present a brief sketch of its progress in our country.

First, as to the efforts that have been made in the artificial culture of edible fish. Mr. S. H. Alsop, of New York, was the first to engage in the business in the United States, and has just been called the "Father of Fish Culture" in America. His commenced in 1848, and has continued in the business ever since. Soon after he was followed by the author of the work under notice, and the business has steadily and rapidly increased. Not only have private individuals taken hold of it, but several States have enacted laws, appointed commissioners and published reports in aid of the industry. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania, have each interested themselves in the enterprise. To show the extent of the fish culture in this country, we have compiled the following list of the persons engaged in it:—Maine—David C. Foster, also New Hampshire, L. Stone, Charleston; Robinson & Hoyt, Merrill; Spaulding & Stark, Nashua. Vermont—J. D. Bingham, Bellows Falls; Massachusetts—R. L. Sturtevant, South Framingham; a Maine man by the way—E. D. Dexter and others, West Barnstable, Connecticut—W. Clift, Myrtle Bridge. New York—G. M. Collins, Munford; S. H. Alsop, West Bloomsburg; Phillips & Vals, Stillington; Johnson, Augustus Belmont, Timothy Carman and Mr. Furman, Long Island. New Jersey—J. H. Slack, Bloomersburg. New Brunswick—S. B. Balkham, Miramichi river. Ontario—Samuel Wilson, New Castle. There are other parties also engaged in the business. The Commissioners of Massachusetts are also engaged in breeding fish at their works at East Wareham. The amount of capital invested in the business must be quite large, as a single establishment on Long Island is said to have nearly a half of that number was a source of warfare which almost depopulated the country of the whole for the army. Taking this into account the increase of wealth and population, as shown above are evidence of the immense natural resources and capabilities of the country, which is yet to become one of the most important in our State.

Population and Property of Aroostook County.

The editor of the *Sunrise*, (Presque Isle, Aroostook Co.) gives some figures, important as exhibiting the growth of wealth and population in that county, during the ten years from 1860 to 1870. The valuation of the town and plantations in 1860 was \$1,525,001, and of the wild lands \$655,641. The valuation of the town and plantations as made up by the Valuation Commission for 1870, is \$8,097,940, being an increase in ten years of \$1,522,939, including wild lands, the total valuation will probably exceed \$8,800,000. The whole number of people in 1860 were 5,311, now 5,268, being an increase of 1,647 during the last ten years. The population of the county in 1860 was 22,449, which was at six per cent. to each poll. The same proportion of population to polls at this time would make the population of the county in 1870, 31,648. It should not be forgotten that during the ten years included in the above report, nearly one half of that number was a source of warfare which almost depopulated the country of the whole for the army. Taking this into account the increase of wealth and population, as shown above are evidence of the immense natural resources and capabilities of the country, which is yet to become one of the most important in our State.

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Communications.

For the Maine Farmer.

Farming in Charlotte County, N. B.

I wish that more could be said in favor of farming operations in this county than I will narrate in this communication. The natural advantages here for farming, are not to be compared with those of any other county in the whole Province. It borders on the coast, and the land is chiefly of drift formation, with more or less rocks of various kinds scattered over it. Good boulders are quite common, which probably have been brought from a long distance, as no two of them are just alike in their composition. Some are of a soft sandstone, and others of a hard granite, and the soil is generally a thin covering of soil; such land is generally productive. The ridges are high, and in general the soil is heavy and wet; the subsoil of such is composed of sand, gravel, and pebbles, and is often quite impervious to water. The trees on these ridges are chiefly hardwood of various kinds. This kind of land was preferred for settling, as it is the most productive for the first crop, and bears far longer than the low lands, which are gravelly and porous, and can be cultivated as soon as the frost is out. This kind of land is not to be found in any other county in the Province. Some tracts of land in some places are a very dry and sterile soil, but these are the exception, and not the rule. Very few of our farmers make farming a specialty. This is a lumbering country, and most of our farmers are engaged in this business, and in most cases, it has a ruinous effect on the farm. It has been the case with many heretofore, that the farmer has been so engaged, that he has neglected his farm, and his land has become so overgrown with weeds and brush, that it is almost impossible to work until the middle or last of June, and then put in to some crop you did not want, has this year been fixed to suit you, and has probably been seeded down smooth and handsome. The work of planting and sowing out of the way in good time, the farmer has had an excellent opportunity in the period intervening between that and hoing, which is just now "the best time," to get his land in good shape for the next year. Improvement long kept in view, but which he has had no chance of doing within the past two years. The progressive farmer always has his eye on such improvements, which he turns his hand to whenever the season's regular work will admit of it. The draining of some swamp—which the present dry weather gives unusual facilities for performing—the building of a piece of new fence, the repairing of some of his farm buildings or the erection of new ones, are among the jobs on this list, some of which the present season gives promise of being performed.

At our present writing we are experiencing quite a severe drought. It will demand of the farmer close attention to his crops and stock, not only now but as the season advances. Put in all the fodder corn you have room for, and keep the hoe going among the planted crops and in the garden. The fodder corn will be wanted by the cows in August, and the ground kept loose will not suffer so much from absence of rain.

A Wholesome Drink for Summer.

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The editor of the *Sunrise*, (Presque Isle, Aroostook Co.) gives some figures, important as exhibiting the growth of wealth and population in that county, during the ten years from 1860 to 1870. The valuation of the town and plantations in 1860 was \$1,525,001, and of the wild lands \$655,641. The valuation of the town and plantations as made up by the Valuation Commission for 1870, is \$8,097,940, being an increase in ten years of \$1,522,939, including wild lands, the total valuation will probably exceed \$8,800,000. The whole number of people in 1860 were 5,311, now 5,268, being an increase of 1,647 during the last ten years. The population of the county in 1860 was 22,449, which was at six per cent. to each poll. The same proportion of population to polls at this time would make the population of the county in 1870, 31,648. It should not be forgotten that during the ten years included in the above report, nearly one half of that number was a source of warfare which almost depopulated the country of the whole for the army. Taking this into account the increase of wealth and population, as shown above are evidence of the immense natural resources and capabilities of the country, which is yet to become one of the most important in our State.

Agriculture of Massachusetts.

SWENERTON. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, &c., for 1869. 8 vo. pp. 254. Published by the Bureau of Country Agriculture, Boston, pp. 160.

This volume, like its predecessors, contains in the lectures and discussions at the last session of the Board, a store of useful information from some of the most distinguished agriculturists and scientific gentlemen of Massachusetts. Among the topics discussed we find the following: Soil and its Use in Agriculture, Minerals, Manures, O. states to the Progress of Scientific Agriculture, Dairy Stock, Fruit Culture, Fish Breeding, Rotation of Crops, Breeding of Horses, Cattle or the Breeds of Cattle and Swine, &c., and among the numerous and valuable papers read at the Convention, the following are of especial interest: The Soil, by Prof. A. A. Wood, of the University of Wisconsin, Col. W. D. Loring and a host of "house lights" from among the intelligent farmers of Massachusetts. An important paper on the New or Little Known Insects Injurious to Vegetation, by Dr. A. S. Packard, Jr., also given. That portion of the volume embracing the returns of County Societies, contains many statements of value from parties who contributed to the different departments of the several Agricultural Societies; and the many on Road-Making, to which we have heretofore alluded—do the volume.

Communications.

For the Maine Farmer.

Farming in Charlotte County, N. B.

I wish that more could be said in favor of farming operations in this county than I will narrate in this communication. The natural advantages here for farming, are not to be compared with those of any other county in the whole Province. It borders on the coast, and the land is chiefly of drift formation, with more or less rocks of various kinds scattered over it. Good boulders are quite common, which probably have been brought from a long distance, as no two of them are just alike in their composition. Some are of a soft sandstone, and others of a hard granite, and the soil is generally a thin covering of soil; such land is generally productive. The ridges are high, and in general the soil is heavy and wet; the subsoil of such is composed of sand, gravel, and pebbles, and is often quite impervious to water. The trees on these ridges are chiefly hardwood of various kinds. This kind of land was preferred for settling, as it is the most productive for the first crop, and bears far longer than the low lands, which are gravelly and porous, and can be cultivated as soon as the frost is out. This kind of land is not to be found in any other county in the Province. Some tracts of land in some places are a very dry and sterile soil, but these are the exception, and not the rule. Very few of our farmers make farming a specialty. This is a lumbering country, and most of our farmers are engaged in this business, and in most cases, it has a ruinous effect on the farm. It has been the case with many heretofore, that the farmer has been so engaged, that he has neglected his farm, and his land has become so overgrown with weeds and brush, that it is almost impossible to work until the middle or last of June, and then put in to some crop you did not want, has this year been fixed to suit you, and has probably been seeded down smooth and handsome. The work of planting and sowing out of the way in good time, the farmer has had an excellent opportunity in the period intervening between that and hoing, which is just now "the best time," to get his land in good shape for the next year. Improvement long kept in view, but which he has had no chance of doing within the past two years. The progressive farmer always has his eye on such improvements, which he turns his hand to whenever the season's regular work will admit of it. The draining of some swamp—which the present dry weather gives unusual facilities for performing—the building of a piece of new fence, the repairing of some of his farm buildings or the erection of new ones, are among the jobs on this list, some of which the present season gives promise of being performed.

At our present writing we are experiencing quite a severe drought. It will demand of the farmer close attention to his crops and stock, not only now but as the season advances. Put in all the fodder corn you have room for, and keep the hoe going among the planted crops and in the garden. The fodder corn will be wanted by the cows in August, and the ground kept loose will not suffer so much from absence of rain.

A Wholesome Drink for Summer.

More than once we have had occasion to speak of the injurious effects of drinking large quantities of cold water during the hot weather; and have also advised our readers to follow the suggestion of an old and esteemed physician, long in successful practice in this State years ago, to use only hot or warm drinks during the excessively hot weather of summer. This physician advised the housewife to always have the tepid water on the stove, that the workmen at haying might have warm drink, as it satisfied thirst much better than cold water, was more healthful, and when consumed in the evening, it was found to be beneficial to the system. In our desire to suggest all the comfort possible to men obliged to labor hard in the heat of a summer sun, we again mention the above, and also present the following receipt for a wholesome field drink, furnished by "a farmer's wife" to the *Germanian Telegraph*.—

"Take of the best white Jamaica ginger root, carefully bruised, two ounces; cream of tartar, one ounce; sugar, one pound; water, ten gallons. Boil the ginger and cream of tartar in the water for one hour, then strain to the strained liquor add one pound of sugar, and again place over the fire; keep it well stirred until it is reduced to about five gallons, and then put it in an earthen vessel, into which you have previously put two drachms of tartaric acid, and the kind of one lemon, and let it remain till the next morning. It is then ready for use, and is a most refreshing and healthful beverage, and one which may be largely partaken of without any unpleasant results even in the hottest weather."

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